

15-948

606

(Espionage Act)

OGC Has Reviewed

Physical Security Branch
Attention: Mr. [REDACTED]
Office of the General Counsel

25X1A

19 October 1951

Espionage Act

1. Reference is made to your memorandum of 8 October 1951, concerning recent changes in espionage laws. You have requested a "very brief but pointed interpretation of some of the salient provisions written in laymen's language so that the gist of the law can be understood by an 'ordinary' person without having to wade through so much legal verbiage (with all due apologies to you and your esteemed and honorable profession)."

2. While brevity may be the soul of wit, and simple language a valuable trait, the meaning of "ignorantia legis neminem excusat" strikes many laymen only through bitter experience. Such persons can testify that there is frequently no substitute for reading a criminal statute in the language of the legislative. However, the attached condensation of the espionage laws should warn prospective employees of the general nature of prohibited activity.

25X1A

OGC/JJB/McD

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